

LETTER
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF WAR,
TRANSMITTING

Special report from Lieutenant-Colonel Casey, U. S. A., touching progress made in building north wing of edifice for use of the Departments of State, War, and the Navy, &c.

DECEMBER 10, 1879.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, December 8, 1879.

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit to the United States Senate, for the consideration of the Committee on Appropriations, a special report, dated the 29th ultimo, from Lieut. Col. Thomas Lincoln Casey, of the Corps of Engineers, concerning the progress made up to the present time in the construction of the north wing of the building for the State, War, and Navy Departments, and a programme of operations for the completion of that wing of the building.

The letter of Colonel Casey shows fully and clearly the urgent necessity for a special appropriation by Congress of \$340,000 at an early date, in addition to the amount estimated for in his last annual report as necessary for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1881.

The above-named amount is needed to push forward the work vigorously, continuously, and economically, and, if not appropriated immediately, no work can go on during the months of July, August, and September, 1880, and during the remaining part of the season, namely, October, November, and a portion of December, but a small force could be employed. The completion of the building would thus be unavoidably delayed fully one year.

For the reasons set forth by Colonel Casey, an early appropriation of the amount requested is earnestly recommended.

GEO. W. MCCRARY,
Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT
Of the United States Senate.

OFFICE OF BUILDING FOR STATE, WAR,
AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS,
OLD BUILDING, NAVY DEPARTMENT, SEVENTEENTH STREET,
Washington, D. C., November 29, 1879.

SIR: I have the honor to submit for your consideration the following statements and suggestions concerning the progress made up to the present time in the construction of the north wing of the building for

State, War, and Navy Departments, and a programme of operations for the completion of that wing of the building, showing the urgent necessity that an early appropriation should be made therefor by Congress at its coming session.

At the last session of Congress an appropriation of \$600,000 was asked to continue the work on this building during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1880. This sum of money was carefully estimated to be barely sufficient, at the then current prices of labor and materials, to carry on the work steadily and advantageously during the period named. The appropriation, as passed, however, contained only \$450,000, specially applicable to the north wing.

The work is, therefore, now left, as will be shown below, not only with a fund inadequate for a vigorous prosecution of it until the close of the present fiscal year, but also without the means with which stone and iron-work may be procured ahead to obviate an inevitable delay of some months in the work of construction during the best part of the next working season. Such delay would greatly extend the time necessary for the final completion of this wing, and entail, also, a considerable increase in its total cost, as is always the case with unduly-protracted work. Moreover, it is not expected that Congress will pass the next regular appropriation until too late for it to be of service for the accomplishment of the desired end.

The work of clearing the site for this wing of the building, which included the removal of the entire old building of the War Department, was commenced on the 22nd of May last, but the direct work of excavation for the foundation was not entered upon until June 17, following.

All the work represented by what is now visible at the site of this wing, namely, excavations, foundations, drainage, stone and brick masonry, and court-yard coal-vaults, has been accomplished since the latter date, the masonry being now nearly complete to the top of the basement story, including the first-story floor.

This progress is largely due to the fact that nearly all the cut granite required was procured in good season.

There is now on hand all the cut granite for the front walls of the first and second stories, and the same will be true in a few weeks as to the cut granite for the corresponding parts of the court-yard wall. An order has been given for only \$7,853.27 worth of cut granite for the third-story front. This sums up the present condition of the granite supply.

The close of the season for laying outdoor masonry is at hand, and operations at the building must nearly cease for the winter. During this time, however, the derricks will be lifted two stories higher, and some other preparations will be made for the continuance of the masonry work as soon as freezing weather shall be past.

The following statement shows the order in which operations may be carried forward to the completion of the north wing, if not impeded by lack of early, or by insufficient, appropriations.

About the middle of next March the regular building operations will be resumed, and the time from that date to the 1st of July, 1880, will be ample for the completion of the masonry to the level of the third-story floor.

Between 1st of July and the close of the working season, which covers the months of July, August, September, and November, 1880, *all* of the masonry of the building proper could be finished and made ready to receive the roof. At the same time the cast-iron window and

door frames and trimmings, and the granite stairways, could be going into place.

During the following winter (1880-'81), the iron roof should be put on, and simultaneously therewith, the extensive piping for heating apparatus, gas and water service should be laid, and the heating and steam boilers set in place.

The building would then be ready for the commencement of the plastering and stucco-work, which should be prosecuted and completed during the summer and autumn of 1881. It is a work requiring about six months' time and the warmer season of the year for its proper execution.

While the plastering is being done, the iron-work of the library should be going into place.

During the same summer season, while the interior of the building is thus occupied by the plasterers and iron-workers, the ground in front will be unencumbered, and the opportunity will be most favorable for excavations and the construction of the approaches, involving a considerable amount of granite work.

The following winter would be consumed by the painting, the work upon floors, windows, and doors, the plumbing, gas fixtures, decoration, and all miscellaneous work pertaining to the numerous details of the finish of the building, which would prepare it for occupancy in the spring of 1882.

In order to accomplish this result, immediate steps must be taken to procure the cut granite and iron-work that will be needed by the first of July, 1880, as these materials will require, for their proper preparation or manufacture, all the time to elapse between the earliest date at which contracts could be duly advertised and let and the time when the building would be ready for them.

It is also requisite that a sufficient fund should be available for the labor of direct construction, or putting materials together in the building, without any delay or interruption whatever during the remainder of the present as well as throughout the whole of the next fiscal year.

Before the time when the annual appropriation is usually made by Congress, that is, some time in June in the long session, the following materials and work should be provided for, namely:

1. Purchase of bricks, cement, cast-iron columns and pilasters, iron beams, and miscellaneous minor supplies of material before July 1, 1880.....	\$37,000
2. Labor and contingencies until July 1, 1880.....	65,000
3. Cut granite for the third-story front, to be delivered by July 1, 1880, requiring four and one-half months' labor of 200 stonecutters (as large a force as can well be handled).....	135,000
4. The remainder of the cut granite for the front walls, to be delivered by August 1, 1880, being three months' labor for 200 stonecutters.....	79,000
5. Balance of cut granite required for court-yard wall (third and fourth stories), to be delivered by July 1, 1880.....	14,000
6. Cut granite for two main stairways, to be delivered by September 1, 1880, for which six months' time should be allowed.....	25,000
7. Cast-iron window and door trimmings, to be delivered early in the fall of 1880, for which six months' time should be allowed.....	55,000
Total amount of funds needed for use before July 1, 1880.....	410,000
Deduct available balance on hand.....	70,000
Total new appropriation needed.....	340,000

It will be noticed that a lack of \$32,000 exists in the amount needed to carry on the work vigorously until the close of the present fiscal year, even should no immediate appropriation be made for its continuance without interruption beyond that time. This is shown by the difference

between the sum (\$102,000) of the first two of the above items and the available balance (\$70,000) now on hand.

An important advantage, in the shape of lower prices and better work, is always to be expected to accrue to the purchaser when bidders can be allowed ample time, both for making up their respective bids and the performance of the work contracted for. In this connection, it may be stated that serious delays, annoyance, interferences, and extra expense to the government have hitherto often attended the execution of work under hurried contracts in this building.

Should the sum of \$340,000 above named be granted as a special appropriation at this time, there should be no reduction of the next regular appropriation from the amount of \$600,000 estimated for in my last annual report as needed for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1881.

The application of that \$600,000 would be as follows:

Iron-work for roof.....	\$35, 000
Iron beams, columns, pilasters, &c., for third and fourth stories.....	13, 000
Bricks, cement, sand, and flue linings for third and fourth stories.....	18, 500
Iron-work for library.....	40, 000
Cut granite for approaches.....	75, 000
Heating apparatus.....	50, 000
Slating, coppering, &c., for roof.....	20, 000
Iron furring, lathing, and partitions.....	9, 000
Water and gas piping.....	6, 000
Lumber for floors, doors, &c.....	10, 000
Labor and contingencies for 12 months.....	173, 500
Cut granite for subbasement of west and center wings.....	100, 000
Cut granite for first story of west wing.....	50, 000
Total.....	600, 000

The last two of these items are very essential to a seasonable preparation for the commencement of work on the west and center wings of the building, the wisdom of which in the case of the north wing has been so well shown by the progress already made with that work.

Such an advantage would be proportionally increased if each sum above allotted to the west and center wings could be augmented by \$50,000, because many months' time is required for the preparation of the stone; many very large stones, difficult or impossible to obtain at short notice in any quarry, are included in those parts of the building; and the orders should be given as early as the fall of 1880.

The total cost of the north wing of the building is not expected to exceed the estimate given in my annual report for the year ending June 30, 1878, namely, \$2,192,414.40 (unless there should be marked changes in the cost of labor and materials), a sum less by about \$1,172,000 than the cost of the south wing, of which the north wing is to be essentially a counterpart.

The aggregate of appropriations made to date for this wing alone is \$1,000,000. This amount increased by the special appropriation of \$340,000 now needed, and the \$450,000 proposed to be expended on this wing out of the \$600,000 asked to be appropriated for the next fiscal year, will, according to the above estimate of total cost, leave but about \$403,000 to be appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1882, to complete this wing of the building, a result which would thus be accomplished in the spring of that year.

If, however, the \$340,000 now needed should not be appropriated immediately, then no work can go on during the months of July, August, and September, 1880; and during the remaining part of the season, namely, October, November, and a part of December, but a small force

could be employed. The completion of this wing would also be thereby unavoidably delayed fully one year.

In view, therefore, of the importance of pushing this building to completion at as early a day as possible, and of the great saving to the United States in cost as well as time which will result from a steady, unchecked, and uninterrupted prosecution of the work to the end, I would respectfully suggest that Congress be asked to appropriate, as early as possible in the coming session, the sum of \$340,000 for the building for State, War, and Navy Departments, needed as above explained—such appropriation, however, to be wholly extra to the sum of \$600,000 asked for as the next regular appropriation.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. LINCOLN CASEY,

Lieutenant-Colonel Corps of Engineers.

Hon. GEO. W. McCrARY,

Secretary of War.

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